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ABSTRACT

The author comments on the meaning of the 16 recommendations of NACVE's 6th Report (Counseling and Guidance: A Call for Change), and emphasizes their basic consistency with policies of both the APGA and the AVA. The remainder of the paper addresses the questions now facing counselors, such as why nothing more is being done to implement these recommendations, and the actions counselors are now willing and able to initiate. The author concludes with remarks regarding the relationship of the career education concept to career guidance service and vocational education programs. (Author/HMV)

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# THE NACVE 6TH REPORT: AN INTERPRETATION OF ITS MEANING

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## Introduction

Almost three years have elapsed since NACVE's 6th Report - "Counseling and Guidance: A Call for Change" was written. When one considers the significance of the topic and the status of NACVE, it does not seem unreasonable to observe that we have waited long enough now to justify calling a national conference charged with considering the report's recommendations. Some might even say that this conference is overdue.

Two bills introduced in the 94th Congress - (1) Part B of the American Vocational Association's new bill; and (2) "The Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 1975" produced largely through the efforts of APGA - stand as clear evidence that both AVA and APGA leaders have either heeded, or agreed with, the general thrust of NACVE's 6th Report calling for an increased emphasis on career guidance and counseling. It seems to me appropriate that this conference be held prior to the time the fate of either of these pieces of legislation is known. That is, our decisions to change, or not to change, should be based on our collective wisdom and commitments, not on the presence or absence of federal law.

The eight pages of NACVE's 6th Report are divided in four sections: (a) 8 facts documenting NACVE's contention that today's youth face serious problems of career choice: (b) 12 generalizations supporting NACVE's

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now famous contention that "the status of counseling, in practice, looks shaky and shabby"; (c) identification of 12 segments of society that NACVE identifies as sharing responsibility for the "shaky and shabby" status of counseling; and (d) 16 recommendations for change that the NACVE judged were needed.

In my opinion, the first three parts of the Report, while subject to debate, should not and need not be argued here. Instead, I view our major charge as one of considering and reacting to the 16 recommendations with which the Report concludes. Only three of these recommendations - Nos. 3, 15, and 16 - are ones reflected in neither APGA policy nor in recommendations previously made by guidance leaders attending APGE-AVA National Conferences held in the late 1960's. Thus, most should not appear strange to members of this audience.

At the same time, these 16 recommendations, like any other set of words, are subject to a variety of interpretations when one seeks to understand their meaning. In view of the fact that, as a consultant to NACVE, I participated in writing the first draft of the 6th Report, I feel a responsibility to try to explain what I think NACVE had in mind when they wrote the 16 recommendations. In doing so, I am not trying to eliminate further discussion concerning the meaning of these recommendations. I <u>am</u> hoping to curtail it in hopes that a majority of our time can be devoted to considering whether or not any or all of us wish to either support or oppose one or more of these recommendations.

The 16 recommendations can be thought of in six categories. My purpose is to comment briefly about the recommendations in each category.

Counselor Certification

Recommendations 1, 2, and 5 pertain to changes in certification patterns for school counselors. Recommendation #1 is that school counselors charged with working with students and prospective students of vocational education be required to have some work experience outside of education. Three comments seem appropriate regarding this recommendation. First, it is not a new suggestion for the guidance profession. It was one of the major recommendations of the National AVA-APGA Conference on Vocational Guidance held in 1965 at Marquette, Michigan. Second, you will note that the recommendation specifies neither the type nor the amount of work experience that should be required. If state departments of education did not add such specific requirements, I doubt very much if many school counselors could be found who could not meet this requirement. Third, it should be noted that this recommendation recognizes and leaves open the option that this requirement not be applied to those school counselors who work exclusively with, say, the so-called "college bound" student. It would, as written, apply to elementary school counselors. It would not apply to all secondary school counselors.

Recommendation #2 is that individuals from the business-labor-industry community be "infused" into the counseling system. The model that prompted this recommendation was that found in Florida's law creating the position of Occupational Specialist. It is that model that should guide your

consideration of this recommendation. In doing so, keep in mind that the recommendation, in no way, states that such persons should either carry the title of "Counselor" or have "counseling" as one of their assigned responsibilities.

Recommendation #5 calls for the training and employment of paraprofessional personnel to work under supervision of professionally qualified counselors. Since APGA already has an official policy statement built around this recommendation, it should not be controversial in nature. It was made primarily for purposes of encouraging, far more than has been done to date, the implementation of this APGA Policy Position on Support Personnel.

Counselor Education

Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 concern themselves with counselor education. Recommendation #3 clearly reflects my own personal conviction that the counselor should be an active participant in career education. An APGA official policy exists that identifies the counselor as a key individual in the implementation of career education. Those who agree with this APGA policy should, it seems to me, have little difficulty accepting this recommendation. It will not be an easy recommendation to implement and will probably require some changes in counselor certification patterns if it is to be widely adopted.

Recommendation #4 speaks to the great need among currently employed school counselors for upgrading their vocational knowledge and career guidance skills. As such, it is certainly consistent with the APGA sponsored "Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 1975" now before the

Congress. Those opposed to this recommendation have, it seems to me, a professional obligation to communicate their objections to the Congress before it takes action on the APGA bill. Those supporting the APGA bill will, I hope, also make their position known to the Congress.

Recommendation #5 was commented on earlier. The only point to be made here is the recommendation that counselor education institutions initiate training programs for support personnel in guidance. While this has been an official APGA policy for a number of years, it has not been widely practiced within counselor education institutions. The recommendation, in calling for decision-makers in education to act, recognizes that it is difficult for any given counselor education department to implement this recommendation without administrative support.

Counselor Role and Function

Six recommendations - Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, pertain to counselor role and function. Recommendations #6 and #10 are aimed at providing additional help to the counselor seeking to provide career guidance services. Recommendation #6 calls for getting more accurate and timely data to counselors regarding vocational training and job opportunities. Its emphasis on computerized guidance system is consistent with APGA publications. Its emphasis on need for better data regarding vocational training opportunities is consistent with APGA's recent testimony before the Federal Trade Commission. Its emphasis on better occupational information is consistent with current efforts of the U.S. Department of Labor and has been long recognized by APGA resolutions.

Recommendation #10, in addition to calling for a lowering of the counselor-pupil ratio, also calls for an increased emphasis on guidance in groups. This is obviously consistent with APGA's actions and policies.

Recommendations 7, 8, and 9 speak to the need for improving the quality of career guidance to minority and to low-income persons and to the need for a greatly strengthened emphasis on counseling in non-school settings. Again, we find a set of recommendations which have, for several years now, been reflected both in the divisional structure of APGA and in policy resolutions passed at numerous conventions.

Recommendation #11 asks for an increased emphasis on both job placement and on follow-up services as parts of counseling and guidance programs. Once again, we find this emphasis present in the APGA sponsored bill now before the Congress. It is consistent with APGA policy.

Career Education

Recommendation #12 calls for career development programs to be considered a major component in career education, both in legislation and in operating systems. It is entirely consistent with the policy statement on career education adopted in late 1974 by the APGA Board of Directors. I do not view it as inconsistent with some of the wording in the current APGA career guidance bill nor with Part B of the current AVA bill.

Legislation

Recommendations 13 and 14 are legislative in nature. Recommendation #13 calls for creation of a separate Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services in USOE. While this is consistent with resolutions adopted in earlier

years by the APGA Senate, it is inconsistent with wording of the APGA bill currently before the Congress. Recommendation #14 calls for categorical funding for counseling and guidance in all legislation calling for these services. It would affect a wide variety of legislation now on the books, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Vocational Education Act, and a number of pieces of manpower legislation. It is a recommendation echoed often in the past APGA Senate resolutions. The lack of categorical funding for counseling and guidance has been a concern of APGA for many years.

"For the Good of the Cause"

Recommendations 15 and 16 fall in a category I would label as "For the Good of the Cause." Recommendation #15 calls on state departments of education and local school boards to confirm their commitment to providing sound counseling and guidance services to all individuals. Note that this recommendation is, in no way, limited to only career guidance. With the current tendency to eliminate counselor positions in some schools and with the current predicted difficulty in assuring the availability of federal funds to support state guidance supervisory positions, this recommendation should, it seems to me, be welcomed by all of us.

Recommendation #16 asks those who now criticize counselors to make some positive suggestions for improving counselor performance. Note that the wording of this suggestion in no way suggests replacing counselors with other personnel. This is consistent with the final paragraph of NACVE's 6th Report which, while recognizing the imperfect nature of counseling

and guidance, pictures it as our best hope for helping individuals cope with the increasing complexity of choices we all face.

NACVE's 6th Report and the American Vocational Association

In commenting on these 16 recommendations, I have often referred to current APGA policies but have, so far, said nothing about policies of the American Vocational Association or its Guidance Division. I did so, not for purposes of ignoring AVA, but rather because, so far as I can tell, there is nothing in AVA policy that would be in opposition to any of these NACVE recommendations. Neither is there, so far as I know, any policy of AVA's Guidance Division that would be in opposition to any of the recommendations that NACVE has made in its 6th Report.

The American Vocational Association has, for many years, supported career guidance through their legislative actions. Look at vocational education legislation. The George-Dean Act of 1938 made it possible to have a nationwide network of guidance supervisors in state departments of education and to create an Occupational Information and Guidance Branch in the United States Office of Education. The George-Barden Act of 1946 made it possible to use federal funds for counselor education and greatly strengthened counselor education programs. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 specifically called for career guidance activities supported by vocational education funds. The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 created, in Part D, a specific categorical funding mechanism for career guidance. No professional association, including APGA, can come close to

matching AVA's legislative record in seeking and obtaining federal support for career guidance and counseling. The record is clear.

Implications

My purpose, so far, in discussing the 16 NACVE recommendations, has been to comment breifly on their meaning and to emphasize their basic consistency with policies of both the American Personnel and Guidance Association and the policies of the American Vocational Association. I can find none of these 16 recommendations which, to the best of my knowledge, is inconsistent with either AVA or with APGA policies. Given these things, the two basic questions we now face are: (1) Why have we not done more to date in implementing these recommendations; and (2) What, if anything, are we ready to do now?

It is significant and appropriate that both the NACVEand the SACVEs of the nation are active participants in this conference. Members of these advisory councils are certainly important "movers and shakers" at the federal and state levels. With over 40 SACVEs having written their own reports on counseling and guidance, there is no doubt regarding either the interest or concern present among SACVE members. If the professional guidance leaders who are participants in this conference decide to implement any or all of NACVE's 16 recommendations, a great deal of potential help in doing so is present among our NACVE and SACVE participants.

It is, in a way, unfair to ask why we have not already implemented the 16 recommendations. That is, many have, to some extent, been implemented at some combination of federal, state, and local levels since NACVE published its 6th Report. At the same time, if there is any state

that has fully implemented all 16 of these recommendations, I don't know about it. It seems appropriate to me that part of this conference be devoted to identifying and specifying the extent to which, in each state, the 16 recommendations have already been implemented. Such an exercise, if reported in the proceedings of this conference, holds great potential for answering some of our critics. It is my sincere belief that much more has already been accomplished than the general public knows. If used as an information base, rather than as a defense against further change, this could be a very wise and desirable thing to do.

The key discussion here, however, should, it seems to me, center around the question of actions we are now willing and able to initiate. Answers to this question will, and should, vary from state to state. I think we should be neither surprised nor dismayed if a particular change appears to be desirable and possible for one state while appearing undesirable and impossible to another.

Career guidance and vocational education require recognition of a mutually dependent relationship if the goals of either are to be realized. It is meaningless for career guidance leaders to continue their call for individual freedom of choice unless they are willing to support vocational education's efforts to expand opportunities from which persons can choose. It is equally meaningless for vocational educators to seek expansion of their programs unless they are willing to support the need for greatly strengthening career guidance services.

As much as career guidance and vocational education need each other, the career education movement needs both even more. Because the career education concept transcends both career guidance services and vocational education programs, I would like to conclude this presentation by stating, as clearly as I can, my feelings regarding relationships that seem to me to be essential.

In my opinion, career education is a concept whose effective implementation depends on strengthening all parts of American education and building collaborative relationships among the various parts of education as well as with the broader community. The career education concept provides a way of building and strengthening the kinds of collaborative relationships between career guidance and vocational education called for by NACVE's 6th Report. For career education to play such a role, it is imperative that the necessity for both career guidance and vocational education to exist as separate professional entities in American education be clearly recognized and supported. The career education concept has nothing to gain, and much to lose, if it attempts to "swallow up" or "take over" either career guidance or vocational education in order to create a career education "empire".

The greatest strength of the career education concept is found in its impotence - in its absolute dependence on the individual strengths and the collaborative efforts of many parts of our society. I firmly believe that the career education concept can serve as an effective vehicle for building the kinds of collaborative relationships so badly needed between

vocational education and career guidance. I hope that, as the national and state leaders from career guidance and vocational education discuss NACVE's 6th Report during this conference, all of us can do within the context of the career education concept. If we can do this, I am sure our deliberations will result in actions that will better serve both individuals in our society and the broader society itself. It is a challenge - and a chance - that will not soon come again. Let us take full advantage of it now.